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OUR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

[As announced editorially in the October *Journal*, we take pleasure in presenting herewith a communication from our English correspondent, Mr. W. E. P. Pantin.]

MY DEAR SIR: You have done me the honor of asking me to write a letter for the *Classical Journal*, and it is a pleasure to comply with your invitation. For I feel that I owe a great deal to American scholars and especially, but by no means exclusively, to Professor Gildersleeve; and it is a satisfaction in such matters to record one's sense of obligation. I think my best plan will be to write without much method about any topic connected with the study of the classics which happens to interest me, in the hope that it may also interest your readers.

When one looks back over the last twelve months one naturally thinks first of the loss which classical studies have sustained by the death of Mr. S. H. Butcher. I need not attempt to say anything of his work as a scholar and a teacher, for it is, I believe, widely known in America as well as in England. But perhaps it is not so generally known how widespread was his personal influence. He had worked at Cambridge, Oxford, Edinburgh; he was intimately acquainted with the Irish universities; he was for many years chairman of the Council of the Classical Association. Hence he knew a very large number of the teachers of classics in all parts of the kingdom and his advice was constantly sought when any important appointment was to be made. There was a large study built out at the back of his house in Tavistock Square near the British Museum. He most hospitably allowed this room to be used for the meetings of the Council and various committees of the Classical Association. It was while working on some of these committees that I spent many a strenuous Saturday afternoon at his house and came to know him a little. And it was a real privilege to know him even slightly. His courtesy was so fine a quality, it was the expression of an intellect and character so rare that one could not be with him without being the better for it. I remember a colleague of mine saying to me, after a general meeting of the Classical Association, "What a treat it is to see Butcher preside!"

It was indeed a pleasure to see with what perfect tact he would keep the discussion going, and how he would intervene when necessary with a few remarks which would throw a new light on the subject and help the meeting forward to a new point of view. Let me quote here from the newspaper report of the commemorative address which Professor Gilbert Murray delivered at a meeting of the Royal Society of Literature:

Professor Butcher, he said, was clear and decided in his views, but he met his opponents with a generous understanding which amounted almost to sympathy. But there was also something purely personal which defied analysis; a curious blend of distinction and friendliness, of sincerity and almost deferential courtesy. He made you feel that he meant just what he said, and was able to speak frankly because he had no shadow of ill-feeling behind; that the singular Irish charm which was a second nature to him was never for a moment used to hide a maneuver or to push a concealed purpose.

I pass on to speak of another scholar lately dead, a man of a very different type, F. W. Walker. As high-master, first of Manchester Grammar School, then of St. Paul's, he produced so many eminent scholars that I think some inquiry as to how he achieved his success will be both profitable and interesting to the readers of the *Classical Journal*. Though circumstances are different at different times and in different countries, the problem that lies before the teacher, the difficulties which waylay the scholar are much the same. By way of introduction let me quote from an article by Mr. R. F. Cholmeley (now head-master of Owen's School, Islington), who served under Walker for many years and played no small part in the development of the school:

He was high-master of St. Paul's from 1876 to 1905. It was a great foundation of more than respectable history, which was doing very little work. Its tradition favored scholarship in the masters, independence in the boys. The school was bound to come away from St. Paul's Churchyard, but it was Mr. Walker who saw the possibilities of a suburban day school and resisted the temptation to add another to the great country boarding-schools which he regarded as mere imitation of Eton. He had no fancy for ruling a school in which learning would be in the second or third place, and the head-master would have to share the government with the boys. He believed in government and he believed in learning; not that he was indifferent to character, but he thought that it was more likely to be developed along the right lines by industry which he understood, than by athletics which he never professed to understand. He weighed the

advantages and disadvantages of all courses, and when he had made up his mind he was not to be moved by the objections to the course he had chosen. In the six years that he spent under the shadow of the Cathedral he made certain of the future. What that future was to be is partly written in the scholarship lists of Oxford and Cambridge. Between 1891 and 1900 five Paulines became fellows of Trinity, Cambridge; between 1882 and 1905 there were only three years in which no Pauline won a Foundation Scholarship at that college; in eleven years Paulines carried off seven Chancellor's Medals, four Browne's Medals, three Smith's Prizes, and a Porson. In sixteen years twenty of his boys won scholarships or exhibitions at Balliol; the Derby Scholarship was won five times, the Ireland five times; there were eight Hertfords and twelve Cravens, seven Gaisford Prizes and six Chancellor's Medals. It was no wonder if men of other schools denounced the high-master of St. Paul's as a scholarship-hunter; and it may be admitted that he was not concerned to refute them. He believed in Latin and Greek; he wanted scholarships because his boys needed them, because he wanted scholars to teach, because he wanted his school to be a place of learning and to be famous as such. If it be asked what were the qualities which enabled him to succeed, the answer is not difficult to find. Some of them were qualities such as a schoolmaster is expected to possess, some were not. He could never have done what he did if he had not been a great scholar, and his scholarship was respected wherever the meaning of scholarship was understood, though he seldom wrote a line. The man who could say reflectively between two puffs of a cigar, "Jowett knew no Greek," had need to be accurate in his scholarship, and his accuracy was monstrous. If anyone questioned him about it, he probably said that it was due to the number of times that he read Gibbon through before he was sixteen and few men have owed more to capacity for hard reading. Next in importance to his own scholarship was his unerring eye for a scholar. It is true that he spent much of his time in looking for scholars. He invented a system which enabled him to give such time as he could spare for teaching to a number of the younger boys, and he taught them elementary Latin and Greek with a minute carefulness which not many of them forgot, and some masters had occasion to remember, if he came across an exercise which had been imperfectly corrected; but even so, the rightness of his judgment was very remarkable. It was not inspiration, it was a persistent determination to get at the facts, and this respect for facts distinguished all that he did and made him a fine teacher not only of boys but of men. . . .

It might be supposed that a man so determined to be master in his own house would be a difficult chief. He was not; in the last years of his high-mastership he was sometimes harassed and impatient; but in his best years—and there were many of them—he was as nearly an ideal chief as any assistant master is likely to find. He could not endure incompetence; but he was a generous judge of men, and when once he had made up his mind that a man was worth something he gave a remarkable measure of freedom, and was even

tolerant of eccentricities which would have been the despair of a weaker head. Despot he undoubtedly was, yet not so much from any sense of personal superiority as because he thought it his business to be one. He was not always fair; he wanted one thing—efficiency—and he wanted that one thing so much that he cared little what weapon he used upon anyone who got in the way of it.¹

Walker always knew from the beginning exactly what he was aiming at. He believed in a classical education as being the best education that could be given: "You cannot get an education which widens the mind more," he would say, "and is more truly liberal, than one which compels you to cast your ideas into the language and thought of another age." Yet he was under no illusions as to its positive value; I remember his saying: "Not *very* good, perhaps, but a man must be very clever to devise a better. It has the experience of the race behind it. Every nation has educated its best minds on the culture of a past age. The Greeks were brought up on Homer, as no other literature but their own was available to them; the Romans on the literature of Greece." He would tell us that what we had to make for was not the ideally best, but the best obtainable under the circumstances. And finding this in a classical education he turned the whole force of his intellect to making the instrument as perfect as possible. Not that he neglected other studies; under his rule St. Paul's produced many distinguished mathematicians. But classics was always the chief subject, and he took care that his best mathematicians should not be onesided.

If asked by what method he produced his scholars, I should reply: First, by influencing his masters. Partly of deliberate purpose in order to make them work at their subject, partly from pure interest in the subject itself, he was always talking about language. Little points of grammar and idiom never lost their interest for him, "I wonder if that's Latin," he would say, "I wish you'd look it up." And one would go and look it up in Merguet's *Cicero Lexicon*, and jot down all the examples one could find. "There's an article on the use of the participles in Greek in *A.J.P.* a few years back; just read it and see if you are right in that

¹ From *The Guardian*, December 16, 1910.

sentence." Or, "Oh, I thought you knew that; I'll show you so-and-so's paper in *Wölfflin's Archiv*. You'd better read it." And one always did read it. Mr. Cookson, now vice-principal of Magdalen College, Oxford, who took the Latin of the highest forms, happily describes him in his relations with his staff as "a scholar who stimulated, goaded, or shamed them into the love of learning for its own sake."

He inspired such confidence by his personality and his intellectual force that one never questioned that the line of work in which he started one was the right one. Mr. Cyril Bailey, now fellow and tutor of Balliol, writes: "I remember well in my last year but one coming back from an unsuccessful attempt to win a scholarship; the high-master said nothing to me but: 'you must read Theocritus.' I not only read Theocritus, but I was perfectly confident that it would prove an unfailing path to success."

Owing to this stimulating influence he always had on his staff a large number of men who were continually "wondering if that's Latin," men living in close contact with their subject, and consequently teaching with more conviction and greater freshness. It is interesting to consider how this spirit of inquiry affected the teaching. Directly, it had an effect on the quality of the Latin and Greek taught. Boys learned to write a more idiomatic Greek and Latin than is usual at an early stage. They learned, too, quite early to see fine distinctions and to get accustomed to hard thinking. But the indirect effect, though less visible, was far greater. Men working under Walker took far more pride in their work than most men do in elementary teaching. We felt we were engaged in some great enterprise; we attached more importance than men usually do to the teaching of the lower forms.

A quotation will show that the same spirit prevailed in the teaching at the top of the school. One of Mr. Walker's most distinguished pupils writes thus of Mr. Frank Carter (now a master at Winchester College), who took the highest forms in Greek: "One quality of Mr. Carter's teaching was as valuable as it is rare. He seemed to be setting out on a joint inquiry with his form, on which both he and they had to collaborate to achieve a result which when achieved was the product of their combined labors. This method

gave to schoolboys a feeling that they were not merely being taught foregone conclusions, but were scholars adding something to the store of classical knowledge."

Mr. Walker wrote little himself, but he did much to stimulate those under him to write and to set a high standard before themselves. "You should write something for your own self-respect," he would say, and speak of "using the golden hours of the night from nine to one." Many books which will be known to readers of the *Classical Journal* owed much to his suggestion, encouragement, and advice; for example, Rutherford's *New Phrynichus*, King and Cookson's *Sounds and Inflexions in Greek and Latin*, Rice Holmes's *Caesar's Conquest of Gaul* and *Ancient Britain*. And the fact that members of the staff wrote books which have achieved the reputation of these naturally led boys to respect their masters and emulate their scholarships.

So far, as to the direct effect on the masters. In talking of his influence on them I have anticipated a good deal of what I might have said as to his influence on the boys. After his first few years at St. Paul's he did not take regular form-work, and his influence in the upper forms was chiefly felt through the masters.

But he took part in the teaching of the special class [I quote again from Mr. Coutts-Trotter's excellent paper in *Res Paulinae*, a collection of papers relating to the history of the school in the last fifty years] coming in and going out as he chose, and a word must be said of this institution which, so far as the writer knows, is peculiar to St. Paul's. The "special" contained two groups of boys; those who had just entered the school, and those who were in process of transition from one part of it to another. They sat in the Great Hall and they wrote exercises of various kinds—Arnold, Clivus, and the like—by themselves, and they received individual and not class teaching. Mr. Walker would go round and examine these exercises, and thus, at the very start of a boy's school career, he had an opportunity of forming a judgment as to his abilities.

The general aim of the teaching in the "special" was to give the boys complete facility in the use of the commoner words, inflections, and constructions, and this was attained by putting them through a large number of exercises, both prose and verse. Any sentences done wrong were rewritten as soon as they had been corrected; and if there were many mistakes the exercises were then done afresh, so that the correct version was the one which remained in the boy's

mind. Such a practice is supposed to be dull, but Walker never had any difficulty in making the boys believe in the system. A writer in the *Classical Journal* for January quotes Friederich Paulsen "to the effect that it is not work which causes overfatigue so much as the lack of conscious progress." That is it: a boy felt he was getting on, and I have known many distinguished scholars speak with enthusiasm of their time in the "special."

Walker made little of translation till a boy had attained considerable command of the language; he had no belief in the view that you should begin to read an author at an early stage, and pick up the language as you go. Mr. Coutts-Trotter expresses his attitude very clearly as follows:

Mr. Walker incumbered himself with very few general theories either about education as a whole or classical education in particular; but one that he held firmly was that before a boy was fit for the higher classical work the rudiments must become almost mechanical to him. "It is too great a strain," he would say. "How can a boy do Latin prose if he has to use his brain to think of a gender or a construction?" He gave it as his experience that intellectual break-downs at the university almost always occurred among those who began learning the classics late; and to whom accordingly the purely linguistic side of scholarship was always a conscious effort of the intellect or memory, and never purely mechanical.

Another distinguished pupil of Mr. Walker's, Mr. Laurence Binyon, of the British Museum, writes as follows:

Passing up the School [after a time in the Special class] I came but little under his immediate notice; but I had already learnt one lesson from his inspiration—the power to work thoroughly at the thing in hand, the secret of concentration. And throughout my time I felt this in the organization of our work. To be enabled, by our system of reading Homer or Virgil in great stretches at a time continuously, to gain such ease and speed that the finest of literature could be absorbed in its fulness and energy with a natural enjoyment, this was a precious boon—a splendid discipline and lasting delight—for which I am ever grateful.

I hope I may be forgiven for writing at such length of the work of a single scholar. My excuse is that there are certain ideas concerning the study and teaching of the classics which seem to me to be of interest and importance and which are connected in my mind with F. W. Walker. I hope they may prove interesting to

others, and not the less interesting from the fact that they were put in practice on a large scale.

I am very much interested to see from your February number that you are moving in the matter of uniformity of grammatical terminology. As many readers of the *Classical Journal* probably know, the subject has recently been considered by a committee in this country and the final *Report*, the result of two years' very hard work, was published in July (John Murray, price 6d). The names of Professor E. A. Sonnenschein (the chairman), Professor R. S. Conway (the secretary for 1909), Dr. W. H. D. Rouse, and Mr. F. G. Thompson will show that the classics were well represented. The committee may, at least, claim to have done two things. It has called attention to a defect in our present practice and has pointed a way to its removal. Teachers and writers of school books will be able to turn to the *Report* and find a carefully considered terminology with which to compare their own. A man may find himself unable to accept *all* its recommendations, but probably the majority will find themselves in agreement with most of them. As the matter is of interest to your readers I will quote two passages from the *Report*:

The result of the Committee's deliberations has been to confirm its belief in the possibility and the desirability of the reform contemplated. It was found that although differences of opinion manifested themselves on particular points of grammatical doctrine, there was on the whole a large agreement on fundamental matters; nor did any cleavage arise between teachers of ancient languages on the one hand and teachers of modern languages on the other. Most of the resolutions of the committee have been reached either unanimously or by substantial majorities. . . .

It is the hope of the committee that the terminology suggested in the present *Report* will be widely adopted, by teachers, by writers of schoolbooks, and by examining bodies, as a standard terminology for the fundamental facts of grammar. The committee, however, recognizes that, in dealing with special points of grammar which arise in connection with more advanced work, teachers and writers of textbooks will find it necessary to supplement this standard terminology by additional terms not inconsistent with those here presented.

Yours faithfully,

W. E. P. PANTIN

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September 9, 1911